

CRAWLSPACE

ISSUE #2



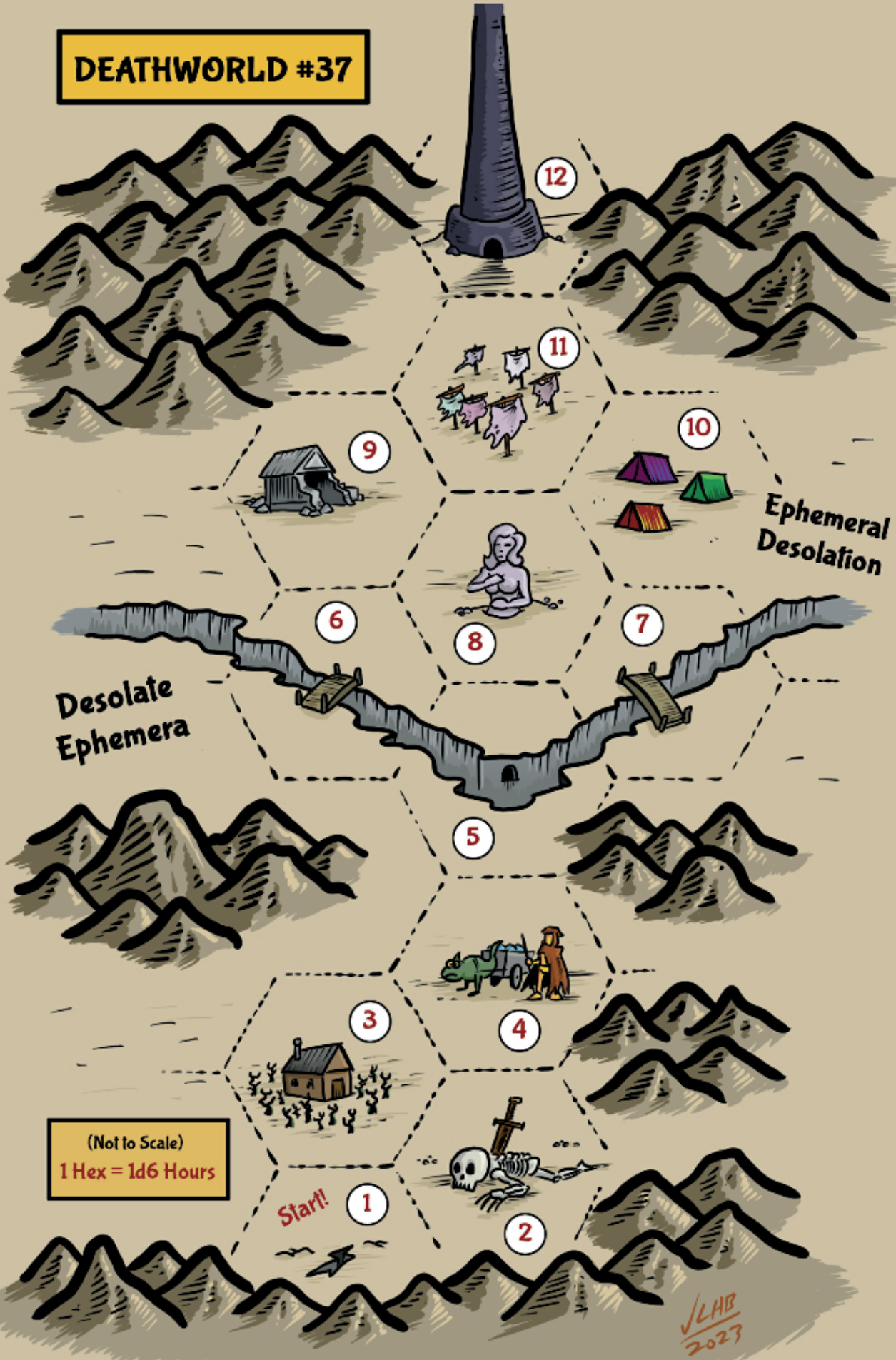
JLHB
2023

TRIUMPH
OVER

COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

THE
GRAVE

DEATHWORLD #37



(Not to Scale)
1 Hex = 1d6 Hours

Ephemeral
Desolation

Desolate
Ephemera

JLHB
2023



TRIUMPH OVER THE GRAVE

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Soundtrack: Wishbone Ash, Atomic Rooster, Rosalie Cunningham, Vini Vici, 1000 Micrograms, David Bowie, Souxsie and the Banshees

www.BernieTheFlumph.com

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A purple, tentacle-like graphic with green spots and a small eye at the bottom left corner, extending from the top left towards the center of the page.

Triumph Over the Grave

A 0-Level Funnel-Crawl

I Woke Up Early the Day I Died

When a mortal dies, their soul rests in dreamless stasis in one of the countless pods attached to the Great Helix that spirals its way through Gnostic Space. The Celestial Arbiters decide whether the souls shall be reborn or transmigrate to a deathworld. There are 333 deathworlds beyond the Veil of Tears, scattered across Gnostic Space. Some deathworlds are large and powerful, some are small and struggling. Many, but not all, are home to gods and psychopomps who dole out reward or punishment to their worshippers. Others are small communities of the post-living, barely clinging to existence, where death does not equate with rest.

Deathworld #37 is a small and destitute deathworld. It is home to no god, and no heroes call it their final reward. Only small and historically unimportant souls come to rest there—like those of zero-level PCs. It has come to a point where the entire plane risks dissolution, as the ontological energies that maintain its existence run scarce.

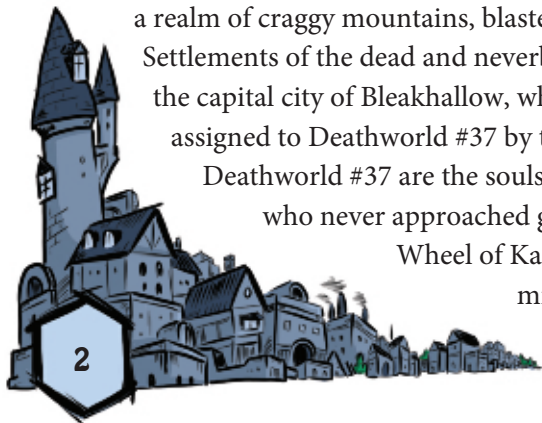
A stop-gap solution was created several centuries ago that has since become a semi-permanent operation. The **Ontologic Crucible** is a furnace at the heart of the **Nigh-Infinite Tower**. Mortal souls are placed in the Crucible, where their essence is molten and refined into the ephemeral plasm of existence. This bolsters the fundament of the plane, and Deathworld #37 continues to exist for a little while longer.

The Ontologic Crucible requires a steady supply of souls to maintain the plane. Fortunately, the administrators of Deathworld #37 have access to the Great Helix. Specialized reapers pluck unimportant souls from the Helix and bring them to the Crucible for refinement. The reapers are careful to only steal a few souls at a time, lest they draw the attention of the Celestial Arbiters. The plan has worked so far, and the administrators are happy to continue with it for the foreseeable future.

If this sounds cosmically unfair, it's because it is. Frankly, I wouldn't stand for it if I were you.

Deathworld #37

Deathworld #37 is properly named *Kerromurt*, but nobody calls it that except in the most official of official documents. It is a small, dusty plane, floating through Gnostic Space. It is a realm of craggy mountains, blasted heath, ashy desert, and vast tracts of nothing. Settlements of the dead and neverborn are scattered across the deathworld, including the capital city of Bleakhallow, which serves as the official receiving area for souls assigned to Deathworld #37 by the Celestial Arbiters. Most of the inhabitants of Deathworld #37 are the souls of mediocre dead—people of no historical impact who never approached greatness. They slipped through the spokes of the Wheel of Karma and now spend their afterlife just getting by, milling about at eternal day jobs. These souls are



governed and guarded by low-status celestial beings neither angel nor demon, with cosmic resumes as unimpressive as the mortals they oversee. Gray-skinned humanoids with finned heads, large yellow eyes, and tiny wings, they have no official taxonomy, but we shall call them the **Administrators**—the middle-managers of the universe.

Kerromurt was once a beautiful afterlife realm, full of weird glories and baroque monuments to Death Itself. But the deathworld's majesty rapidly waned and crumbled, as none of the entities assigned to its management wanted to put in the effort required to maintain it. The statues fell. The great halls stood cold and empty. The Elysian springs ran dry. Now Deathworld #37 barely holds onto existence. Chunks of the plane have melted away into ephemeral mists. Only the Ontologic Crucible maintains the deathworld's existence, and even then just barely. This adventure focuses on the area immediately around the Nigh-Infinite Tower, far away from the capitol (or at least as far away as one can be on a world so small). The Nigh-Infinite Tower houses the Ontologic Crucible as well as a stairway that leads back to the world of the living.

What's Going On Here, Anyway?

When Deathworld #37 began its dissolution some centuries ago, the Administrators frantically looked for a solution. The Nigh-Infinite Tower out in the Dolesome Wastes was one of the few remaining artifacts of the deathworld's previous glory. For reasons long lost to celestial record keeping, the tower contains a stairway (also nigh-infinite) that climbs all the way back to the Living World. The Administrators suspected that such a dimensional breach might indicate the presence of other cosmic fissures.

And indeed it did! In the mountains not too far from the Tower, scouts found a pathway that led to a gap in reality—a chamber which stood open to the infinite void of Gnostic Space and the Great Helix. The Administrators figured they could nick a few soul-pods from the Great Helix, and as long as they kept their theft to a minimum, they should avoid the notice of the Celestial Arbiters.

Demonic contractors from one of the better Hells built the Oncologic Crucible in the basement of the Nigh-Infinite Tower. Torpid souls were periodically snatched away from the Grand Helix by assigned operators called **Gleaners**. These souls were tossed into the Crucible where their mortal egos were destroyed and their spiritual plasm was shored up the fundament of Deathworld #37. It was an inelegant and risky solution, but it would serve as a stop-gap until a more permanent fix could be found.

That was 300 years ago.

Yesterday, someone *did* notice the theft—not the Celestial Arbiters, but **Gorgophon**, an Angel of Balance and a Champion of Fate. Ineffable voices brought the soul theft to His attention. Thousands of souls burned away—destinies destroyed before a chance of Grace and Rebirth. This would not stand.

